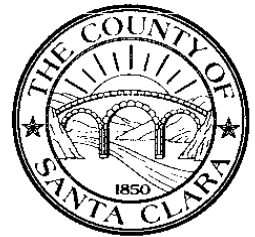


County of Santa Clara

Public Health Department

3003 Moorpark Avenue
San Jose, California 95128



For immediate release

April 3, 2003

Contacts:

Joy Alexiou
408.885.4164
Teresa Chagoya
408.423.0717

Additional Suspected SARS Cases Reported Expanded Surveillance Guidelines Released

SAN JOSE, CA – Santa Clara County Public Health Department officials have identified two additional suspected cases of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), an atypical respiratory illness that originated in Asia. Santa Clara County has now reported a total of nine suspected SARS cases to the California Department of Health Services.

Public Health officials will hold a press briefing at 1:30 p.m. today to provide information to the news media. The briefing will be held at 2220 Moorpark Avenue, San Jose, CA in the Public Health Auditorium.

The eighth case involves a 7-year old Hong Kong resident who is visiting Santa Clara County. The ninth case involves an 58-year old male who had recently traveled to the People's Republic of China. Both new cases are in home isolation.

"While Santa Clara County residents should know what to look for regarding this illness, they should not be alarmed," stated Dr. Marty Fenstersheib, Health Officer for Santa Clara County. "To date all of our suspected cases have traveled to one of the affected regions. Additionally, the Public Health Department is actively responding to this emerging disease and is continuing to provide information to our local medical community to enhance our response to this outbreak."

Prior to any identified suspected cases, the Public Health Department began educating the Santa Clara County medical community about SARS. Health Alerts and Clinical Guidelines have been issued to increase awareness of SARS among physicians and hospital medical staff, enhance the medical community's ability to respond to any patient experiencing symptoms, and guide the reporting of any suspected cases to local health officials. Additionally, Public Health Nurses are in daily contact with suspected cases and anyone who has been in close contact with those cases. Suspected cases are monitored for health status and to prevent additional exposures. Their contacts are monitored to insure appropriate medical care should symptoms develop.

"The Public Health Department has worked hard to educate our local medical community about this emerging disease," commented Dr. Guadalupe Olivas, Director of the Public Health Department. "This is the work of Public Health. It's our job to inform, educate and mobilize for current and emerging public health issues and to respond to disease outbreaks."

The most recent Health Alert, issued 4-01-03, contained Expanded Surveillance Guidelines for the Santa Clara County medical community.

“We are asking our medical community to take the lead and help us limit the spread of this disease,” announced Dr. Fenstersheib. “To limit the potential spread of this disease in our county, we are initiating an expanded surveillance.”

The specific conditions that must be present to meet the case definition of SARS are:

- History of travel to Hong Kong; the People’s Republic of China; Hanoi, Vietnam; or Singapore within ten days of symptom onset; or close contact with persons who are ill and meet the case ;

AND

- Fever (>38 degrees C or 100.4 degrees F);

AND

- Cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, or abnormal chest x-ray.

Santa Clara County residents can call 408.885.3980 for more information about SARS.